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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-eighth session
Agenda item 6

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION AND OF APARTHEID, IN ALL COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII)

Written statement submitted by International Education Development, Inc.
a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[25 July 1996]

The humanitarian situation in Iraq

1. International Educational Development/Humanitarian Law Project (IED/HLP) has been concerned for six years about the humanitarian situation in Iraq as a result of the embargo imposed on that country following the Gulf war. We have voiced our concerns with other non-governmental organizations in a major initiative led by our delegate, Mrs. Margarita Papandreou, 1/ at the 1995

1/ Mrs. Papandreou, the former First Lady of Greece, is Global Coordinator of Women for Mutual Security and is a founding member of the International Commission of Inquiry on Economic Sanctions, organizations with which we have a close association.

session of the Commission on Human Rights and through a number of joint statements. In our view, subjecting essential humanitarian aid such as food, medical supplies and other subsistence needs to embargo violates existing international legal standards.

2. We have been pleased that the Sub-Commission has also raised similar concerns, most recently in its decision 1995/107 (Humanitarian situation in Iraq). For this reason, we wish to provide to the Sub-Commission the full text of a resolution passed in Rome at an international conference chaired by Mrs. Papandreou and attended by members of the International Commission of Inquiry on Economic Sanctions, Women for Mutual Security and other non-governmental organizations.

RESOLUTION

"The Hunger Weapon International Conference held in Rome on the 10th and 11th of May 1996, with the participation of jurists, humanitarian organizations, human rights activists as well as representatives of peace associations and international solidarity groups, political parties and labour unions from Italy, France, Spain, Great Britain, Germany, Greece, the United States, Nicaragua, Cuba, Libya, Tunisia, Ireland, Algeria and Iraq:

Considering

(1) the serious sufferings of the civil population of Iraq caused by unprecedented sanctions imposed in the name of the United Nations against that country and which have in fact, among other things, resulted in the deaths of well over 500,000 children, as has been certified by agencies of the same United Nations;

(2) the serious consequences on the Cuban economy and people caused by the unilateral United States economic blockade which has been imposed for over 30 years and which has resulted in enormous difficulties to the economic and human development of that entire nation;

(3) that gratuitously imposed sanctions against Libya are causing much suffering and problems in particular to the poorest part of the population.

Noting

(1) the tendency of the United States, Great Britain and others from among the wealthy and powerful countries to increasingly make use of the Security Council and its economic sanctions, or the threat of using them as a tool form advancing United States hegemonistic interests against those of the developing and formerly colonized countries of the world;

(2) that these sanctions are also used as a means of strengthening the United States hegemony among other industrialized countries;

(3) that economic sanctions directly punish the civil population and particularly harm the poorest and weakest;

(4) that blockades, a modern version of the Middle Ages sieges, should be seen as a tool of war, totally inconsistent with the aims of the United Nations;

(5) that although the Security Council authorized the Secretary-General to implement Security Council resolution 986, the United States and Great Britain are interfering in the on-going talks between Iraq and the United Nations concerning the sale of Iraqi oil for the purchase of food, medicines and other supplies needed for humanitarian purposes;

Believing

that economic sanctions, regardless of the alleged motivation behind them, can in fact constitute a serious violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention (civilians), the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions and other treaty-based and customary humanitarian law principles; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the right to life; or, as in the case of Iraq, can constitute genocide, a crime against humanity as recognized in international law with clear consequences;

Calls for

(1) the immediate removal of Security Council sanctions against Iraq and Libya;

(2) the immediate removal of the United States blockage against Cuba;

(3) the ban of the use of sanctions as a means of intervening in international disputes:

Appeals

to peoples, individuals, organizations, and international peace and solidarity associations to mobilize toward this aim:

Condemns

United States interference in the negotiations between Iraq and the United Nations Secretary-General in the implementation of Security Council resolution 986:

Resolves

(1) to declare January 17, 1997 as the "Second World Day of Struggle Against Civil Embargoes" and to continue the mobilization started last year on that date in several countries;

(2) to publicize and distribute this conference's resolution in all countries represented in the conference;

(3) to support initiatives contesting the application of sanctions using available legal procedures;

(4) to address United Nations Member States to support a General Assembly resolution requesting the International Court of Justice for an Advisory Opinion regarding the legality of Security Council sanctions on Iraq."